

SEASON 3



# OLAMI MENTORSHIP

## **SESSION 5: GOD DELIVERS**

THE HISTORIC MOMENT AT SINAI

# OLAMI MENTORSHIP

Dear Mentor and Mentee,

Congratulations on starting season three of mentorship!

It is both humbling and thrilling at the same time, that the two of you have found value in getting to know one another, and that you continue to benefit from your regular meetings. In conjunction with Sinai50, we are pleased to present you with amazing resources for season three.

We are grateful to Rabbi Raphael Butler; the mastermind of Sinai50; an initiative that is ensuring that Jews around the world have an opportunity to reclaim Torah wisdom and knowledge, and make it their own. The great news is that these resources are but a small component of the 50 sessions that Rabbi Butler and Sinai50 have curated. We would be thrilled to provide additional resources when you have completed these initial sessions.

You know, when you purchase a new car, typically there is an owner's manual in the glove compartment. If you are a savvy and responsible automobile owner, you will take the time to familiarize yourself with the content of the manual to ensure maximum output and productivity for your new vehicle.

And while an owner's manual for a new car is imperative in getting to understand the complexities of your ride, isn't life not infinitely more complex than a four-wheeled machine? If so, shouldn't life come with an owner's manual for life?!

The good news is that it 'does'. The manual is called the Torah, and through its retelling of our history, its many directives for moral living, and our studying and following the Torah, we can ensure optimal performance and elevated living.

In this season, through Sinai50, we endeavor to provide you with a "top 10" list of the Torah's wisdom for living, in an effort to share the beauty and richness of the Torah's narratives and experiences.

You will have an opportunity to examine the age-old issue of anti-Semitism from the conflict of Jacob and Esau, analyze dealing with trials - and then triumph - from Abraham, understand our unique mission as Jews, and so much more!

Mentorship that includes Torah wisdom and inspiration is taking mentorship to a whole new level, as studying and analyzing Torah together connects the soul of two Jews.

It is our hope that through this journey of practical Torah wisdom, the two of you will continue to thrive alongside one another and further enhance the special relationship that you have begun.

We are honored to provide personal guidance or assistance if necessary. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us directly. To reach the Director of Community Mentorship, Rabbi Shlomo Landau, please call 908.770.0056 or email [slandau@olami.org](mailto:slandau@olami.org). To reach the Associate Director of Community Mentorship, Jordana Baruchov, please call 973.370.0414 or email [jbaruchov@olami.org](mailto:jbaruchov@olami.org).

Wishing you the best of luck on this journey! The OLM Team

# GOD DELIVERS: THE HISTORIC MOMENT AT SINAI

The profound significance of the events of Mount Sinai go beyond the Ten Commandments. It encompasses the entirety of the 613 mitzvot—commandments, each serving as a thread of connectivity between God and the Jewish Nation.

At Sinai, the Israelites stood not only at the base of a mountain but also at the culmination of their journey from the depths of slavery in Egypt. The moment marked the affirmation of their undying loyalty to God and their commitment to embrace a life guided by the Divine blueprint.

It wasn't a mere transfer of rules and regulations; it was a covenant that bound the Jewish people to God in a reciprocal relationship. As they accepted the Torah and the 613 mitzvot therein, they embraced a path that extended beyond each individual observance. It was a collective pledge to live by a set of principles that would shape their interactions with one another, with society, and with the Divine. It wasn't only observing laws it was living life differently.



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In embracing the full package of the 613 mitzvot, we acknowledge that Sinai was a transformative moment whose impact extends across generations. Just as the Israelites stood at Sinai united in purpose, we too stand united with them in embracing the enduring legacy of the 613 mitzvot, fostering a connection that transcends time and resonates in our lives today.

The 613 mitzvot, like interconnected fibers, weave a tapestry of connection between man and God. Each mitzvah represents an opportunity to deepen our spiritual bond, to express both gratitude and to reaffirm our loyalty to the Divine. These mitzvot also serve as a guide to ethical living, helping us navigate the complexities of our world with integrity, compassion, and justice.

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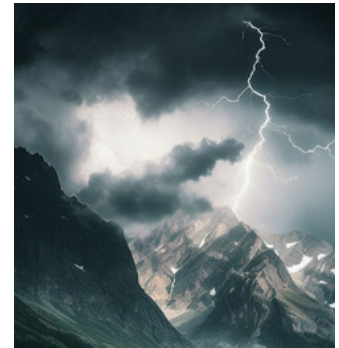
Imagine standing amidst the Israelites at the base of Mount Sinai, a mountain enveloped in a cloud of glory. The atmosphere was charged with anticipation, as the people awaited an encounter with the Divine. This moment was not just a historical event but a transformative experience that shaped the destiny of the Jewish people and left an indelible mark on the fabric of humanity.

As the Israelites stood before the mountain, they were witnesses to a unique phenomenon. Thunder rumbled, lightning streaked across the sky, and the mountain itself quaked. This wasn't mere meteorological chaos; it was a reflection of the spiritual importance of the event unfolding. It signified that the Divine was descending to communicate with humanity directly. Amidst this awe-inspiring spectacle, God revealed the Torah to Moses, which contained not just a set of laws but the blueprint for a just and ethical society, as well as the key to spiritual growth and connection. The Torah, comprising both written and oral traditions, offered principles to govern not only individual lives but also the community's well-being.

This moment at Mount Sinai encapsulated an unshakable trust in the Divine wisdom guiding the laws and teachings about to be revealed. The Israelites declared “naaseh v’nishma” - a resounding affirmation to both “do” and “understand” the commandments. This commitment symbolized a covenant between the Jewish people and the Divine, transcending time and space to echo in our observance today.

This declaration wasn’t merely an agreement to obey; it was an embodiment of the trust that we place in the Divine’s wisdom, even when the rationale behind certain mitzvot is beyond our grasp. As individuals, we fulfill these mitzvot not only out of obligation but also with a profound commitment rooted in “naaseh v’nishma” - a commitment that embodies our trust in the Divine wisdom.

In embracing the message and value of each mitzvah, whether understood or beyond our grasp, we honor the commitment to live a life of purpose and connection. By practicing “naaseh v’nishma,” we not only fulfill our obligations but also embark on a continuous journey of discovery, humility, and spiritual transformation, allowing the Divine wisdom to guide us through the intricate tapestry of our lives.



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The beauty of the 613 mitzvot lies in their collective essence, a mosaic of duties and values that resonate across the tapestry of Jewish life. This mosaic underscores the understanding that no single individual can fulfill all mitzvot, emphasizing the importance of unity within the Jewish community. The division of mitzvot extends across diverse groups - Kohanim, Levi'im, men, and women - each playing a unique role in upholding our traditions. This shared responsibility fosters a sense of mutual support and interconnectedness, forging deeper connections among individuals.

The mitzvot, however, transcend mere adherence to “do and don’ts.” They encapsulate profound values that steer our ethical compass. Tzedakah, the act of giving, embodies compassion and social responsibility, and Bikur Cholim, visiting the sick, manifests empathy and care for others’ well-being. These value-driven mitzvot provide a moral roadmap guiding our actions beyond the specifics of individual laws.

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# RELEVANCE TO OUR DAILY LIVES:

## **SUSTAINED COVENANT FROM SINAI: GUIDING OUR WAY**

Sinai endures through the ages, guiding our path and actions. Affirmed by “naaseh v’nishma,” the 613 mitzvot reflect our commitment to follow in the ways set forth, honoring the legacy of Sinai in every step we take.

## **ETHICAL LIVING: VALUES BEYOND COMMANDMENTS**

Beyond rules, the mitzvot embody timeless values. Acts like Tzedakah, Bikur Cholim, and Tikkun Olam exemplify a moral compass, weaving Sinai’s essence into our daily lives and inspiring us to make a positive impact.

## **EMBRACING LIMITATIONS, ELEVATING OURSELVES**

“Naaseh v’nishma” teaches that understanding isn’t a prerequisite for observance. We embrace mitzvot beyond comprehension, transcending our limits. In this willingness to “observe” even prior to our full understanding, we discover growth, echoing the essence of Sinai’s transformative journey.



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## **MITZVOT: OUR FOUNDATION AND GUIDE**

Mitzvot ground us in tradition and steer our way forward. As they defined the Israelites' path, they define ours. In an ever-changing world, these commandments offer stability, purpose, and connection to something greater.

## **DEFINED BY SINAI: AN ETERNAL BOND**

That bond of God to His People never cease. A commitment proclaimed then resonates now. Like the Israelites, we're united by the enduring message of "naaseh v'nishma," living out its significance through a life of mitzvot, faith, ethics, and purposeful existence.



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# LESSONS LEARNED:

## UNITY AMIDST DIVERSITY:

While there was diversity among the millions who stood at Sinai we can find empowerment in coming together for shared values and goals.

## EMBRACING THE UNKNOWN:

The declaration “naaseh v’nishma” called to embrace the unknown with trust and willingness. This mindset can guide us to step outside our comfort zones.

## LIVING WITH PURPOSE:

The covenant forged at Sinai instilled a sense of purpose in the Israelites. A life of purpose is worth the pursuit.

## CONNECTION THROUGH RITUAL:

The rituals and commandments established at Sinai connect us to a lineage that spans generations. How comforting and empowering it can be in the realization that my observance today mirrors that of the generations that preceded me.

## ETHICAL COMPASS:

The mitzvot offer an ethical compass for navigating complex situations. By applying these values, we can make decisions that align with principles of compassion, justice, honesty and empathy.



### Living with Purpose:

The covenant forged at Sinai instilled a sense of purpose in the Israelites. A life of purpose is worth the pursuit.

# POINTS TO PONDER:

## **ARE WE OPEN**

to trusting actions or decisions even when a complete understanding is lacking?

How can we infuse rituals with deeper meaning to facilitate personal growth?

## **HOW CAN WE FIND INSPIRATION**

from the unity of diverse groups working towards shared goals?

## **HOW CAN WE INFUSE RITUALS**

with deeper meaning to facilitate personal growth?

## **HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE**

awe and reverence in our everyday life? Have we ever had a Sinai moment of clarity?

## **HOW DO WE EFFECTIVELY**

apply ethical principles derived from mitzvot in our daily encounters?



# SINAI 50

## 50 VITAL JEWISH TEXTS THAT EVERY JEW SHOULD KNOW

*This Sinai50 volume is dedicated in loving memory of*

**DR. STANLEY PAUL AND CLARA EVANS**

שמואל פנחס בן צבי הלוי ז"ל

חיה איטא בת רב משה ע"ה

# SINAI50

The Sinai50 Project comprises a collection of 50 vital Jewish texts that every Jew should know and that are of immense significance for our daily lives. These texts have been carefully selected to provide clarity and understanding to all those who read them. With the texts being made accessible both online and offline, this project ensures that these invaluable resources are readily available to Jews worldwide, fostering a deeper connection to their heritage and offering relevant insights for navigating everyday challenges.

In cooperation with

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**AFIKIM**

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